The I-Search Paper

An I-Search paper is probably different from research papers or essays you have written in the past. The goal of the I-Search is to conduct a serious inquiry into ANY TOPIC THAT YOU CARE DEEPLY ABOUT, as long as it is school-appropriate.

The paper is as much about *what* *you found and how you came up with your answers* as it is about the answers themselves. You pick the topic, select the questions, and guide the learning. I will be your coach along the way.

The parts of the I-Search paper are:

1. **My Topic**

In this section, you explain what your topic is and why it matters to you. Really sell your topic! Craft an opening with zing and pizzazz. Convince your reader that your topic is worth exploring. DON’T start with “For my I-Search paper, I decided to write about the topic...” BORING!! Make the reader CARE!

1. **What I Already Know**

Since you are interested in this topic, I’m sure you already know something about it! What do you know already? Where have you gotten information about it in the past?

1. **Questions I Need to Have Answered**

Notice the word *need*! Make sure that your questions matter to you. If you really don’t care about your questions, both your search for information and your resulting paper will be boring! Make sure your topic is broad enough to keep you looking for answers for some time, but not so broad that people would have to write a whole book to address the topic well. You’ll need to have at least three or four burning questions.

1. **The Story of the Hunt**

This section will be the story of your search for information, told from your own point of view. Tell what search tools you use and how well they work. What did each source teach you? Which sources did you decide to use (and how did you know they were good sources? We’ll discuss how to tell in class!), and which sources did you decide not to use, and why?

In this section, remember that you **must** have several kinds of sources:

**READ**—something you can read. A book, a newspaper or magazine article, an Internet article, a pamphlet, an historical document, etc.

**WATCH**—something you can watch. A movie, a TV show/episode, a podcast, a demonstration, a news program, or observations you make yourself (for example, how children act on a playground, or which bathroom stall gets used most often)

**ASK**—your interview of an expert. Experts are people who know a lot about a topic, no matter how old they are. We will discuss how to prepare for an interview in class. You can interview in person, by phone, by text/IM or even by email or postal mail...but some ways are better than others.

**DO**—a personal experience; something you do that relates to your topic. For example, you might try changing the oil on your mom’s car if your topic is “Basic mechanical skills every new driver should have” (get permission first, naturally).

1. **What I Learned**

In this section, summarize what you have learned about your topic during the search process. What conclusions have you reached? Which questions can you now answer? What new questions do you have? Not all searches are completely successful—are there some questions you still can’t answer? Which ones? Did you learn anything about yourself as a researcher? What did you do well in your research? What do you need to do better next time?

1. **Works Cited**

Researchers must provide complete information about the sources they use. You will use MLA style to format your paper and your Works Cited page. You will also be sure to use in-text citation correctly.

There will be at least one handout (and one class for working) on each section. There are progress assignments along the way.

Requirements:

Did you notice that there is no minimum number of pages or words? That’s because I care more about what is in the paper than how long it is. Your paper will

* be double-spaced (ALL of it, including the Works Cited page(s)
* have “Normal” (one-inch, or 2.54 cm) margins on all four sides,
* be printed in Times New Roman font, 12 point, black ink (colour may be used for graphics and charts which ADD to the message of the paper)
* have the student’s first and last name, course and block, and date submitted at the top left of the first page,
* have a header on each page which includes the student’s last name and the page number,
* use MLA format for in-text citations and full citations,
* include at least **five** reference sources, including at least ONE print source, at least ONE online source, and at least ONE interview source. (Note that you will need at least one each of READ, WATCH, ASK and DO sources.),
* indent the start of paragraphs by 1” (2.54 cm) (and not skip extra space between paragraphs)
* be stapled together with a single staple in the top left-hand corner (a paper clip may be used if a staple is not large enough to hold your paper together).

How will this I-Search project be marked?

There are several “signpost” assignments along the way that will count as assignment grades, and your final paper will be marked on the standard marking rubric (out of 30) as a unit test (it’s the “research” unit).

Assignments:

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| “Signpost” Assignment | Due Date |
| Choose a topic (topic assessment sheet). |  |
| Preliminary source cards and note cards. |  |
| Thesis statement. |  |
| Interview Questions. |  |
| Parts 1, 2 and 3 draft. |  |
| Sources #2. |  |
| Interview write-up. |  |
| Part 4 draft. |  |
| Part 5 draft. |  |
| Part 6 draft |  |
| Complete rough draft |  |
| Revision |  |